

I support media diversity

My purpose in writing you is to comment on Docket No. 02-277, the biennial review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. I believe that if the FCC's goals include promoting vigorous competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, it must retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. The FCC should also seriously consider reinstating many of the regulations that were abandoned during the Clinton administration. These regulations ensured that the public interest was at least SOMETIMES served by the companies that profit from use of the public airwaves. Their limitations on the market power of huge corporations in the broadcast industry is demonstrably justifiable.

Media deregulation since 1996 has resulted in less competition, not more. It has permitted immense corporate conglomerates to devour smaller competitors, further consolidating the media industry. There may indeed be more television channels than ever before, but the spectrum of views presented has become far more limited. Fewer points of view are seen and heard, and important stories are ignored when they conflict with the interests of the corporation. Narrowing the range of perspectives available to the citizenry is harmful to our democracy. And it is seen by the rest of the world as evidence that the much loved and valued freedom of the press and information we so loudly claim as our own, looks a mile wide, but in fact, is only an inch deep.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I urge the FCC in the strongest possible terms, to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation, to solicit the widest possible participation from the American people. For it is US Â- the viewers and listeners - who will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. It is important for the FCC not only to consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also of those with a social or civic interest. In short, all Americans are stakeholders in this debate and it is of paramount importance that these decisions be taken with due deliberation, considering the will and the well being of the citizenry, not just the interests of the corporate media.

Considering the devastating impact these rule changes have had and will have on our democracy, it is essential that the Commission slow down, and give the public both easy access to information about them, and time to review the issues thoroughly. To do otherwise is to deny the American people a meaningful say in a process that fundamentally changes the nature of communications in this country Â- communications made possible by the use of OUR airwaves.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Laura Zink de Diaz